

“Your Heart” 2009

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- What is Cholesterol
- Ideal levels
- Ways to reduce levels



QUICK BITES

1. GET ACTIVE
2. LOSE WEIGHT
3. REDUCE BLOOD PRESSURE
4. EAT MORE WHOLE GRAINS
5. ADD MORE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES TO DIET
6. CHOOSE LEAN MEATS & LOW FAT DAIRY
7. EAT MORE FISH SUCH AS TUNA OR SALMON
8. TAKE YOUR MEDICINE
9. CHOOSE MONO OR POLYUNSATURATED FATS

WHAT IS IT?

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that is critical to cellular membranes and function. It is part of the building blocks of hormones like estrogen and testosterone. Because cholesterol is a fat, and fat and water do not mix, it has to be transported through the body by lipoproteins, HDL and LDL. These lipoproteins do not behave the same way. LDL cholesterol will build up and lead to plaque buildup and atherosclerosis. It is this build up of plaque that increases your risk of heart disease and stroke. Triglycerides are excess calories stored as fat.

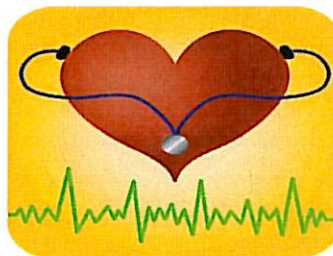
WHAT ARE IDEAL NUMBERS FOR CHOLESTEROL LEVELS?

Getting to know your numbers and understanding what they mean is really important. Aim for total cholesterol less than 200, LDL less than 100 mg/dl, HDL for women should be greater than 50 mg/dl, for men greater than 40 mg/dl. Triglycerides should be less than 150 mg/dl.

CHOLESTEROL

WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE MY LEVELS?

There are many things that you can do to bring your numbers down. First is to increase your activity level. 30 minutes of activity most days of the week is recommended. This has been shown most effective at lowering LDL levels and raising HDL. If you are overweight, losing just 10% can make a huge difference in your levels. Since your body makes all the cholesterol it needs, you do not need to consume any more! Cholesterol is found in foods made from animal products, to include dairy and eggs. Have you noticed the latest furor over “trans fat”? Trans fats can actually raise your cholesterol levels! But they are not the only culprits! Saturated fats are just as devious. These harmful fats are primarily located in processed foods. If your food comes from a box or a can, pay attention to the trans fat and saturated fats.



Keeping Your Heart Healthy is our Number One Priority!

It isn't all about taking out or limiting some foods. It is also about adding the good food. Eating more whole grains and mono and poly unsaturated fats can really make a difference. This is the cornerstone to the Mediterranean diet: olive oil, avocados, nuts and seafood.

One of the biggest lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your cholesterol levels is quit smoking. I know you have heard this before, but it bears repeating. Not only does it have a direct impact on all your cholesterol levels, but it increases your blood pressure and increase your body's plaque buildup. This sets up a perfect scenario for a stroke. Please contact Doctors Direct for information and support on tobacco cessation!

Finally, there are medications and dietary supplements. These range from the familiar statins that require prescriptions to the **fish oil supplements, grape seed extract and red yeast rice tablets**. Please make sure you talk to your doctor about your medicine and any supplements you are taking. It is very important to take your medications regularly and be proactive in your health!

Questions? Please call us at 1-877-503-0388 opt 1, ask for Debbie or Kim.